FRIENDLY EXHORTATION

TO THE

UNINSTRUCTED POOR.

Benevolus

Supposed to be written by the Rev.d Dr. Horne of Chiswick —

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ALTHOUGH the Author of the following little Work is perfectly ſenſible that there is no want of Tracts greatly ſuperiour in point of matter, to that he here offers to the Public, yet he could but think there was ſome room for improvement in point of Form. How far he has ſucceeded in his attempt at ſuch an advantage for the inſtruction of thoſe for whoſe benefit this Addreſs is deſigned, he cannot pretend to be a proper judge. If it ſhould be thought worthy the notice of thoſe who intereſt themſelves in the reformation of the Age, he will reflect with no ſmall pleaſure on the contribution of his feeble endeavours to aid their exertions in ſo truly charitable and patriotic an undertaking.

Friend and Neighbour,

YOU know it is our duty to do one another all the good in our power: and, as I now come to you purely for that purpoſe, I hope you will not refuſe to lend an ear to the few words which I have to ſay unto you: eſpecially, as you ſee I want nothing of you, and therefore can have no other end in view, but that of performing a friendly and charitable piece of ſervice.

Now then to the buſineſs of my viſit; for, ſuch you may look upon the letter which is now put into your hand, by

means of which I ſpeak to you, though not perſonally preſent with you.

If you ſhould be one of thoſe thoughtleſs people, who are living as if there were no God to ſee, or call them to an account for their doings; ſuffer me to admoniſh you to conſider in time, what you have to expect, if you ſhould be cut off, (as thouſands have been, and daily are) in this hopeleſs condition.

If you have been unfortunately brought up in ſuch deplorable ignorance, as to be led to believe that, at death, there is an end of you; believe me, you lie under a miſtake altogether as groſs and abſurd, as it is miſchievous and ruinous. For, even the poor beaſts can

hardly

hardly diſcover a greater degree of ſtupidity. Your body dies, it is true; and yet, that only for *a time:* becauſe it muſt riſe again from the grave, at the great day appointed by God for the judgment of the world. For, judged it *muſt* be, as ſure as it was *made.* But, your ſoul which dwells within your body, and enlivens, and moves it as it pleaſes, will never die; becauſe, being wholly ſpiritual, and not liable to corruption, or decay, it is not of a periſhable nature. This therefore, when it leaves the body, which is its tabernacle, only changes its ſituation, by paſſing into another, and to us, at preſent, an inviſible world.

Now, that the ſoul is a thing quite different from the body, and that it is

that which acts upon, and animates it, you may be assured from this circumstance: viz. that the body is no more able to think and reason, when the soul has left it, than a piece of wood or stone: as you may see in a corpse; which lies motionless and senseless as a log.

Now, this could never be the case, if the matter of which it was made, had any powers of its own, independent of the soul: and, hence it is, that immediately after the separation of the soul from it, it putrifies, and returns to the dust from whence, as your Bible tells you, it was at first taken: for, the body of Adam, the first man, was, we are by that informed, made out of the *earth*.

It

It requires no learning, to underſtand what has been above obſerved; as your own common ſenſe will enable you to comprehend the truth of it, as well as the wiſdom of the greateſt philoſopher.

Now then, neighbour, let me aſk you, if you ought not to be concerned for the welfare of that *immortal* part of which I have been ſpeaking? From what has been before ſaid, you ſee that when men die, they do not ceaſe to live, but only ſhift their quarters from one world to another. And, their diſpoſal in that other ſtate, will be determined by their behaviour in *this*.

Good ſouls will be admitted into a place of inconceivable happineſs called *Heaven*; and, the wicked will be

turned into an abode of as extreme misery called *Hell*; which is deſcribed in the Holy Scriptures, as a *lake burning with fire and brimſtone*, echoing continually with the diſmal ſounds of *weeping and wailing and gnaſhing of teeth*: than which, I doubt not you will think with me, there cannot any thing be imagined more terrible. And, that all this is really and ſtrictly true, you may be perfectly aſſured, becauſe *God himſelf hath expreſsly told us ſo*; who can no more deceive, than he can be himſelf deceived.

To aſk you if you would knowingly throw yourſelf into this dreadful place, would be to aſk you, if you had loſt your ſenſes. I will only therefore aſk you, if you have ever *thought* about the

the matter. For, if you have not, it is certainly high time you ſhould, leſt you drop into it before you are aware; becauſe there is no avoiding it, if you die unprepared for your departure: that is, before you have repented, and made your peace with God. For, remember, there is no repentance in the grave; but, as you go down to it, you muſt riſe from it to judgment. And, remember further, that that is no repentance which is not followed by a *change of life*.

To think, therefore, that it will be enough to cry for mercy on a death-bed, is, of all others, the greateſt errour you can poſſibly fall into. And, you may depend upon it, it is nothing but a vile trick of Satan, to perſuade men into ſuch an opinion, that he may more ſecurely

lead them to deſtruction, and gratify his malignant temper by reproaching, and inſulting them for the folly of their credulity. For, this cruel treatment will ſurely be experienced by every one of thoſe unhappy ſouls, who fall a prey to the wretched deluſion of the Prince of darkneſs here pointed out. And, as it is one of the moſt capital pieces of policy, by which he enlarges the boundaries of his kingdom, it is here I would adviſe you to place your ſtrongeſt guard.

Loſe no time then in leaving thoſe wicked courſes, whatever they may be, in which you have hitherto been engaged, and by which you have expoſed yourſelf to the wrath of God. For, there is no ſuch thing as ſalvation to be hoped for, till you have humbled yourſelf by unfeigned ſorrow,

ſorrow, and confeſſion of your ſins, and earneſt prayer for the divine forgiveneſs, *through the merits of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, accompanied with a ſincere reſolution of obedience to the commandments of God for the time to come, and fervent ſupplication to him for grace, to enable you to *keep that reſolution*. For, take notice, the weakneſs of your corrupt nature is ſuch, that you will not be able to do it without the aid of his Holy Spirit; which, for your comfort, I am alſo to obſerve, he hath *promiſed* to all that faithfully aſk it; that is, by humble and hearty prayer. Be ſure, therefore, to be *diligent* and *fervent* in the diſcharge of ſo neceſſary and important a duty.

Conſider, how great reaſon you have to be thankful to Almighty God for admitting

mitting you again to his favour upon ſuch eaſy terms; for, if he had treated you, as you have deſerved, by your numberleſs and heinous offences, you muſt long ago have been condemned to the vengeance which you have provoked. And, what would then have been your condition! How infinitely then ſhould you think yourſelf indebted to His goodneſs for having ſo long ſpared you, after having ſo daringly flown in the face of his authority!

If what is here ſaid to awaken you to a ſenſe of your danger, ſhould have that happy effect, (as, I hope, through the Divine bleſſing upon this humble endeavour it may) you will ſoon ſhew it by the change of your conduct; no longer diſgracing your *nature*, as well as the heavenly religion into which you have

have been baptized, by that reprobate converſation, and thoſe heatheniſh manners, which have hitherto ſo ſadly marked your character, but living as a man, and eſpecially as a *Chriſtian*, ought to live. Inſtead of *Curſing*, *Swearing*, *Lying*, *Slandering*, *Stealing*, *Drunkenneſs*, *Whoredom*, *Idleneſs*, *Sabbath-Breaking*, and ſuch like, by which you have given ſuch great offence to all *good men*, as well as grieved the Holy Spirit of God, you will henceforth practiſe the direct contrary to all theſe: you will ſtudy to approve yourſelf ſober, modeſt, chaſte, and temperate, true in your words, honeſt in your dealings, and peaceable in your actions, eaſy to be entreated, gentle and kind to all, not wiſhing to hurt even your *bittereſt enemies*; but returning *bleſſing* for *their curſes*, and ready to forgive,

give, as you yourſelf hope to *be forgiven*. And, you will take care to complete this courſe of duty towards men, by devotion and piety towards God; keeping ſtrictly his Sabbaths, reverencing his ſanctuary, *and walking blameleſs in all his commandments and ordinances*. You will *delight* yourſelf in the law of the Lord, and *find your pleaſure in his ſervice*. And, an additional motive for you to be more zealous in this work of reformation is, that you may repair, as far as is in your power, the miſchief done by your former *bad example*; which you will be the more deſirous of doing, when you conſider what a cruel thing it is to be the means of leading others into miſery.

If, as is too likely to be the caſe, you ſhould be laughed at, and ridiculed by the

the former companions of your vices, for ſuch an alteration of your conduct, do not be moved thereby from your purpoſe; but, by patient forbearance, and manly perſeverance, endeavour to convince them of the wiſdom of your determination, and gain them over to your ſide. For, when they ſhall ſee you become ſo much more reſpectable and happy, by doing what their conſciences continually tell them they themſelves *ought* to do, how know you but you may be the inſtrument in the hand of God of converting *them* from the errour of their way, and ſecuring to yourſelf by that *nobleſt of all acts of charity*, the glorious reward of *ſhining* in the kingdom of heaven *as the ſtars for ever and ever?* Think then only what an encouragement this is

to

to conſtancy, and exertion in the diſcharge of your duty.

Let me aſſure you, neighbour, it is only through *ignorance* that men look for happineſs in wickedneſs; and, that if they once knew the ſatisfaction and enjoyment attendant on a virtuous, and religious life, they would not continue a moment longer in their evil courſes. But, how are they to know this, if they will not make the *trial?* And, what is the reaſon that they will *not* make the trial? Surely, the experiment muſt be worth the making, where ſo much is promiſed to pay them for their trouble: eſpecially, as nothing could be *loſt*, even if nothing were *gained* by the attempt.

But, tell me, neighbour, have you ever felt any thing like pleaſure in thoſe heatheniſh

heatheniſh ways above-mentioned? Did not your conſcience reprove, and ſmite you after the commiſſion of any of thoſe ſins there ſpecified *? Did you not feel uneaſy, diſpleaſed and angry with yourſelf, at having done what deſerved puniſhment, and ſeemed to *call* for it? And, did not the ſecret apprehenſion of it, ſome time or other, embitter your days, and make you, at times, weary of your life? I am certain, whether you will own it or not, this *muſt* have been the caſe: becauſe it is the declaration of God himſelf, that *there is no peace to the wicked*; but, they *are like the troubled ſea, when it cannot reſt*. This is the fate of every wicked man, from the leaſt to the greateſt: and, the worſt curſe that

* See Page 15.

the

the moſt malicious boſom could vent againſt it's moſt inveterate enemy, would, doubt not, be, that he might become the *wickedeſt of all men.*

And, as this is the invariable fruit of wickedneſs, ſo no leſs certain is it that the very contrary is the lot of goodneſs; and, that of all men living, the virtuous and pious are the moſt truly to be envied. For, whatever their outward condition may be, they inwardly enjoy a peace *which paſſeth underſtanding*, ariſing from an aſſurance of the divine favour and protection in this life, and from *a hope full of immortality* in the next. And, if you want further ſatisfaction on this head, let me recommend it to you to go to a truly good man in his Cottage, and aſk him if he would change ſituations with the

the richeſt and greateſt ſinner in the kingdom: whether he would not *rather be a door-keeper in the houſe of his God, than to dwell in the* moſt ſplendid *tents of ungodlineſs*. You may depend upon it he would, and that all the world would not tempt him to determine otherwiſe.

I have only to add therefore to this friendly addreſs, my moſt earneſt wiſh, and deſire, that you may make no delay to *become* this happy man, by entering upon that virtuous, Chriſtian life, which, and which *alone*, can beſtow ſo invaluable a privilege. In your preſent ſtate of ſlavery to *the luſts that war in your members*, your captivity to that evil ſpirit, who is equally the enemy of God and man, and who ſeeks to inveigle you into ſin here, only that he may plunge you into

into everlaſting miſery hereafter, it is impoſſible you ſhould have any ſolid enjoyment while you live, or any hope when you ſhall come to die: ſeeing you are every day encreaſing your guilt, and *treaſuring up to yourſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath.*

Think then in time of this perilous, this terrible condition, and while it is yet in your power, *lay hold of eternal life*, by embracing the gracious offer of ſalvation, which God of his infinite mercy tenders to you in the Goſpel, through the merits and mediation of that *well-beloved Son*, whom he ſent into the world, that he might *die for our ſins, and riſe again for our juſtification.* And, think, oh! with trembling think, how juſtly you may be denied the opportunity

of another day, or even another hour, *to flee from the wrath to come*, if you ſhould refuſe to liſten to the call *now* given you, by me, the unworthy inſtrument of his Providence.

If you wiſh, as I hope you do, for fuller information, let me refer you to the miniſter of your pariſh, as your appointed ſpiritual paſtor; who will rejoice in receiving the loſt ſheep again into his fold. Lay without reſerve your wants before him, that he may guide you by his counſel, and relieve you by his comfort. Both which that you may partake of in full proportion to your neceſſities, and to the final ſecurity of your eternal welfare, is, neighbour, the ſincere, and ardent prayer of your unknown monitor and friend,

BENEVOLUS.

APPENDIX.

AFTER I had finiſhed the foregoing Exhortation, it came into my mind, neighbour, that, conſidering how little notion you might probably have of the nature of the duty of Prayer, which was ſo earneſtly recommended to your practice; it may not be amiſs to obſerve, that you need not make yourſelf at all uneaſy about the manner in which you expreſs your meaning. God knows the thoughts of the heart, before they are clothed in words; and therefore, if you be but ſincere, you may be ſure your petitions and ſupplications for the pardon of your ſins will be graciouſly accepted at the throne of mercy, however ſimply, or imperfectly they may be made. If you ſhould ſay only, "*God be merciful to me a ſinner!*" "*Lord ſave me* that I may not periſh, for thy Son Jeſus Chriſt's ſake!—Lord, give me grace to turn from my evil ways;" and ſuch like: If it be the real language of your heart, accompanied with an unfeigned ſorrow for your paſt tranſgreſſions, and a firm reſolution of obedience to the will of God for the future, doubt not of being heard, and of obtaining the bleſſing you aſk for. But, whatever aſſiſtance you want, I take it for granted, you will eaſily acquire it, by betaking yourſelf to the Miniſter of your Pariſh, to whom I have referred you; and with whom I now leave you.

THE END.

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